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BETTER PLANTS

God's first gift to man was a Beautiful Garden

VOLUME III

FEBRUARY—MARCH, 1925

NUMBER 1



The camera gives us a glimpse of the gardens of our friends

Garden of Mrs. Joseph S. Huntington, Lyme, Conn. Border of Farr's hardy plants. Iris pallida dalmatica and Queen of May; White Lupines; Forget-me-nots; Newport Pink Sweet William.

Iris Mme. Chereau, Dwarf Iris, Lupines and Hosta (Funkia.) L. M. Sykes, Excelsior, Minn.

Delphinium, Miss Lingard Phlox and Pink Sweet William as grown by Miss Fannie L. Brent, Hinsdale, Ill.

The backyard is the laboratory and playground for the gardener. Mrs. George A. Patten, Augusta, Maine.

From Now Until Spring Comes

Contributed by the gardener
of a Wyomissing estate

Be cautious when the first few warm days have melted the winter snows. Do not yield to the first impulse which urges you to uncover plants which were protected for the winter. Wait until reasonably certain that no more spring frosts are lurking around the corner.

When removing winter mulch and coverings, it is best to do so gradually. At first remove the upper half entirely and loosen up the remainder. Later on remove the balance, or work it into the soil if practical.

Do not be alarmed when the drying winds of spring burn the evergreen foliage. Keep the plants watered and by mid-summer the new growth will have covered the unsightly parts. Trimming is then in order, and the evergreens will be restored to their original shapeliness.

This is the time to repair, renovate and increase the bird house colony. Birds are cheaper than spray materials for the fight against insects. Sprinkle the interior of old bird houses with sulphur.

Here is a little secret: English sparrows do not like swinging bird houses. There-

fore, use the swinging type to discourage this feathered nuisance.

Keep the bird feeding stations well filled during early spring. Late frosts or snowfalls may play havoc with the songster population because the natural food supply is cut off.

Do not apply spring fertilizers until April, no matter how early and mild the season. You should, however, obtain manure now. Use sifted ashes for mixing with garden soil, and around the trunks of trees. Stable manure is becoming scarcer every day, so that sheep manure, bone-meal, hydrated lime and wood ashes are the commercial and most convenient substitute. Instructions for proper use should be demanded from the makers.

With the exception of spring flowering plants and roses, February is the last month during which pruning should be done. When pruning, remember the purposes—(a) removing dead, broken and excess growth; (b) trimming for future

effect. Do not prune spring flowering plants until after their spring blooming period. Use a hand saw and a good sharp knife to obtain clean cut results. Never use an axe or hatchet for pruning. Disinfect wounds with creosote and paint with shellac thinned with wood alcohol. If street trees interfere with telephone wires, have a few branches removed or thinned out. *It is not desirable or compulsory* to have a butchering gang lop off the tree so that it looks like a man with his hands cut off.

All dormant trees and shrubs that are subject to San José scale should be sprayed with a soluble oil, or lime and sulphur compound, obtained at the seed or hardware store. Plants already affected should be sprayed twice. Tree trunks with a rough bark should be cleaned of insect larvae and fungus with a stiff brush before spraying. A coat of whitewash after cleaning is an excellent practice.

Whenever the ground is open, trees, shrubs and evergreens can be planted during January and February. A great

(Concluded on page 3)



Start the Mums in spring if you want blooms next fall

THE "RAGGEDY MUMS" IN AUTUMN GARDENS

Autumn spells chrysanthemums, and it is time now to lay the "foundation for the October garden." For garden mass and for table cut-flowers, there is an unlimited variety of type and color to select from—singles, doubles, buttons, pompons, earlies, lates; whites, pinks, reds, yellows, bronze and two colored. Truly chrysanthemums are the boon of otherwise desolate autumn gardens. Long appreciated by the country dweller and much admired by the motorist, they have at last come into their own in formal landscape design and in the propagating beds of the nurseryman.

For best results, remember the following pointers: Plant in spring in a light soil. In summer, water freely during dry spells. Mix some well-rotted manure with the soil when buds are forming, and pinch off lateral buds for specimen bloom. When buds break into bloom, stake and tie the sprays which tend to droop. For beetles, spray with a solution of 10 quarts of water into which a "guest-size" cake of Ivory soap has been dissolved. For plant lice use Niagara All-in-one Dust.

Pinch back the young plants in spring to induce branching. Old plants may be divided in spring and greater quantities thereby obtained. During frosty nights protect the plants with a covering or screen of any convenient cloth. During winter protect the plants with a light covering of hay or straw. Fallen leaves are frequently harmful as winter protectors because they become soggy and rotten in spring.

Chrysanthemums will not bloom in fall if you do not plant this spring. They should never be planted in fall, because bloom will be set back anyway until the next fall, while the chances are the plants

Chrysanthemums for Spring Planting

Here is a list of chrysanthemums which are ready for shipment from either field-grown or field-grown potted stock. The latter are field-grown plants that have been potted this spring, so that they can be moved and planted safely until late May. Many gardeners prefer to postpone chrysanthemum planting so as to spread the spring planting rush; our supply of field-grown potted plants will enable them to do so without any additional expense or any shock to plants. Those who cannot postpone chrysanthemum planting until May, will receive plants fresh from the nursery row, one year old, field-grown.

Every plant is guaranteed true to name and must arrive in a satisfactory condition. Any subsequent first-year failures are replacable at one-half original price, provided the plants are paid for within thirty days after shipment.

30 cts. each, \$2.20 for 10, \$16 per 100.
Parcel post prepaid. For express add 5 per cent.

Standard Early-Flowering Varieties

August Nonin. Pale lavender.
Charles Joly. Rosy pink.
Cranfordia. Bronzy yellow.
Edna. Creamy white.
Firelight. Dark red.
L'Argentuillais. Chestnut.
Mme. Marquis. Blush white.
Tints of Gold. Yellow shaded red.

Singles

Alice Howell. Orange yellow.
Arlington. Pink.
Columbia. Canary yellow.
Miss Hilda Wells. Tuscan red.
Ida C. Skiff. Bronzy amber.
Kate Carter. Old rose.
Mrs. W. E. Buckingham. Pink.
Mrs. W. H. Waite. Soft pink.
Mr. Vernon. Garnet.
Potomac. Deep rose pink.
Stanley Ven. Rose color.
Washington. Cherry-pink.

Buttons

Golden Lyda Thomas. Yellow.
Golden West. Yellow.
Little Bob. Bronze.
New York. Bronze.

Improved Pompons

Capt. Cook. Rose-pink.
Francis Huckvale. Gardenia white.
Mrs. Chester Robinson. Old rose-pink.
Mrs. F. H. Bergen. Pale lavender.
Mrs. H. Harrison. Delicate pink.
Mrs. Nellie Kleris. Pink.
Mrs. Henry Vincent. Fawn.
Shaker Lady. Tyrian-pink.

Hardy Pompons

Acto. Bright rose.
Donald. Light lavender.
Excelsior. Canary yellow.
Florham Queen. Deep old rose.
Golden Climax. Soft orange-yellow.
Indian Hill. Deep yellow.
Louise Davenport. Golden bronze.
Maid of Kent. White.
Minta. Soft lavender.
Quinola. Golden yellow.
Sarah Townsend. Golden bronze.
White Doty. White.

INDIAN SUMMER COLLECTION

Assorted chrysanthemums by color, or our selection.
25 plants of five different colors for \$3.
50 plants of five different colors for \$6.
100 plants of ten different colors for \$12.
(Above prices not applicable on customer's selection.)



"Raggedy Mums" in the garden of Mrs. F. B. Wheaton, Washington, D. C.

BETTER PLANTS

Published Bi-monthly by

**Bertrand H. Farr—
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Vol. 3 February-March, 1925 No. 1

AN IMPORTANT CHANGE

Why Better Plants are now Shipped
Parcel Post Prepaid

In the 1925 edition of *Better Plants*—
By Farr and for the first time in Farr
history, prices include Parcel Post charges.

This radical change was not made without considerable investigation, research
discussion, auditing and forethought.

While the plan was under consideration, the following facts were established. These facts justified the decision to prepay Parcel Post charges, and thereby eliminate expense and inconvenience to Farr customers:

1. That the annual total of parcel post charges amounted to 6 per cent of the value of material shipped by parcel post.

2. That the expense of billing, accounting and collecting of parcel post charges amounted to almost 3 per cent of their total.

3. That, therefore, Parcel Post would not cause the local customer to pay the postage on distant orders, because elimination of office detail would materially reduce our annual postage bill so that in reality all Farr customers would benefit thereby.

4. That increased sales resulting from prepaid postage, without a resultant increase in prices, would compensate for any possible loss.

5. That the saving on clerical detail, along with certain other economies which have been introduced and which will be discussed in *BETTER PLANTS* from time to time, would permit **Farr prices to remain as low as those found in catalogs whose distributors do not prepay parcel post.**

ASTILBES—UNUSUAL FLOWERS
FOR NATURALIZING OR FORCING

Few perennials which make for themselves permanent homes in the hardy garden are easily potted and forced into bloom in the average home. Among the list of such plants, *Astilbe*, erroneously called *Spirea* and frequently termed *False Goat's Beard*, is about the most adaptable to both conditions. The airy, graceful and fluffy plumes of *Astilbe* offer attractive possibilities for indoor decoration, and for bold mass or accent effects in the perennial borders.

Outdoors. *Astilbes* are at their best in moist and shady locations abounding with humus, but will give good results in any well prepared and cared for perennial border. In such borders they should be watered frequently during dry spells and while making active growth. The blooming period ranges from June to July, according to species. They can be looked for after Japanese iris have had their say.

Height ranges from 18 inches to 6 feet. Once established they make themselves at home and are self-increasing by root divisions.

Indoors. From potting in fall and bringing indoors, it requires about three months to bring them into bloom. *Astilbes* potted in November can be expected to bloom during February; or, with experience, can be deferred until Easter, when florists find prime use for them. The quality of soil is immaterial, so long as it is light and easily handled. Temperature may range from 50 to 65 degrees. *Astilbes* may be forced in a living room, but if the temperature runs high the blooms will quickly wilt if used for cutting. Abundant watering is essential. In fact, they should be soaked every day. This, by the way, is essential to most indoor plants. It isn't always the gas or furnace fumes which ruin potted ferns, etc.—it is lack of water.

A good start. For those who wish to enjoy this unique and highly decorative perennial, there is a choice from the following varieties:

Arendsii, Pink Pearl. Dense panicles of small pearl-like flowers; light pink. 75 cts. each, \$5 for 10.

Arendsii, Salland. Beautiful red flowers borne on rigid stems. 6 ft. 75 cts. each, \$5 for 10.

Arendsii, Salmon Queen. Beautiful salmon-pink. 75 cts. each, \$5 for 10.

Arendsii, Venus. Bright, deep violet-rose. 75 cts. each, \$5 for 10.

Chinensis. Large heads of silvery pink flowers. 75 cts. each, \$5 for 10.

Japonica, Queen Alexandra. A beautiful hybrid. Soft, delicate pink; splendid for forcing, and perfectly hardy. 75 cts. each, \$5 for 10.

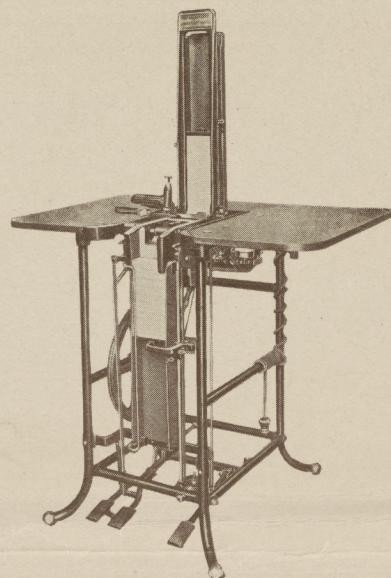
Japonica, W. E. Gladstone. Large, feathery plumes of pure white flowers. 75 cts. each, \$5 for 10.

Moerheimi. Enormous spikes of small flowers of purest white. 75 cts. each, \$5 for 10.

Collection of 8 varieties of Astilbe (8 plants) for \$5, postpaid. Regular catalogue price, \$6.



Astilbe in the "dream garden" of J. Stanley Hoopes, Hunters, New York. They flourish in this semi-shaded location.



MODERN METHODS

This is an illustration of the motor-driven addressing machine which automatically places the names and addresses of Farr customers on the address section of *BETTER PLANTS*. Through the foot pedal control of stencils, a local high school boy is able to address 8,000 magazines in an eight-hour day without strain to himself or the machine.

New names are hand addressed until they become Farr customers. A stencil is then made, and filed in its alphabetical place in the drawer assigned to the state in which the customer resides. If a new name does not produce an order within one year, it is dropped from the mailing list. This is only one of the labor saving devices which have been installed under the Better Plants policy. Others will be illustrated and described in future issues of *BETTER PLANTS*.

I doubt if you would see a lovelier mass of larkspur anywhere, as the plants are so strong, 8 and 9 feet tall, and all shades from light to indigo blue.

The same year I had one hundred iris and this year I have taken out 215 iris for a new bed, but didn't have time for the phlox. Some year I hope to have more of your plants.—JANE S. MURPHY, Maine.

FROM NOW UNTIL SPRING
(Continued from page 1)

deal more of this work can and should be done during the winter. Whenever the temperature permits, dig the new holes. Cut with fair-sized balls and allow the balls to freeze before moving.

A stitch in time saves nine, and one hour of cultivating as soon as the sogginess is out of the ground is worth nine hours of slaving under the hot sun after the weeds have had a good start.

It is my positive experience and only a simple conclusion that it pays to *order early* just as much as it pays to plan and act early along other lines. Early orders are in line for early shipments. Since 1918 few plants are imported and many varieties are scarce. Only the early orders for such varieties have a chance of being filled in entirety.

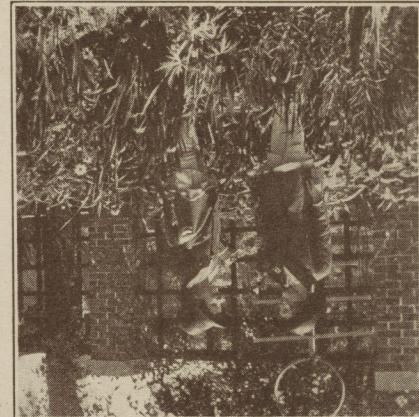
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den because Farr prices
include P. P. delivery.

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CENT
Return P.M.
Paid by Issuing Pa.
SPRINGFIELD, ILL.

Successful as will anyone who uses Farr's
plans.—MRS. KATHERINE H. PAGE,
The little gardeners seem to be quite
How does your garden grow?"
"Marry, Marry, quite contrary."

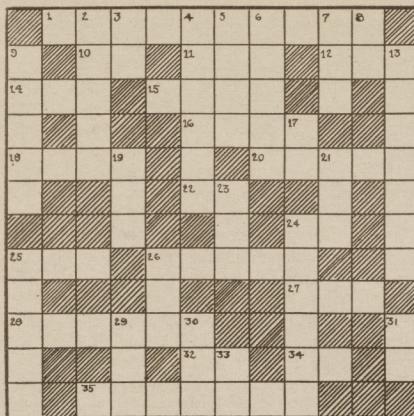
Charles E. F. Gersdorff
1825 N Capital St.
Washington D.C.

A Magazine Devoted to the Hardy Garden
BETTER PLANTS—February—March, 1925



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BETTER PLANTS



BETTER CROSS WORD PUZZLE

Contributed by a Wyomissing friend for those who are interested. We believe you'll need the dictionary at least once.

Across

- Beautiful borough.
- Pronoun (plural).
- Name of auto.
- Long period of time.
- A curved line.
- To prepare the ground.
- A sharp blow.
- Not a sham.
- Price stated.
- In a like manner (adverb).
- A preposition.
- To acquire.
- Having trunk and branches.
- A number.
- Sweet smelling flowers.
- Our country (abbreviation).
- Second note of the scale.
- The flowers we all love and admire.

Down

- South American plant.
- Bone (Latin).
- Famous flowers.
- To transfer to another.
- Pertaining to the sun.
- Clear profit.

PERENNIAL MOVING SALE

By the spring of 1926 our moving operations to a low, overhead location on the state highway will be completed. This is the last year for moving sales. Help move these thousand lots of husky field-grown perennials to your garden and be paid for doing so.

FREE PLANTS WITH EACH ORDER

For every \$5 worth of plants ordered in lots of five or more, you may select ten plants in one or two other varieties, which will be included in your shipment without any extra cost to you.

5 or more plants of one variety at 22 cts. each.

25 or more plants of one variety at 18 cts. each.

Parcel post prepaid. For express add 5 per cent.

Conditions

- Less than 5 plants of one variety cannot be included in this offer.
- Selections must be confined to this list.
- Cash, or definite credit references, must accompany each order unless you have dealt with us before.

Perennials for Back-Grounds, Mass Planting and Naturalizing

Anchusa, Opal.
Hardy Asters.
Boltonia asteroides.
Echinops ritro.
Helianthus atrorubens.
Helianthus, H. 'Joon.
Helianthus, Miss Mellish.
Helianthus, Wolley Dod.
Lysimachia punctata.
Lythrum, Brightness.
Miscanthus gracillima univittata.
Rudbeckia, Golden Glow.
R. nitida Herbstonne.
Rudbeckia, Rays of Gold.
Salvia, azurea.
Thalictrum flavum.

Cut-Flower Plants

Achillea, The Pearl.
Anthemis tinctoria.
Anemone, Coupe d'Argent.
Hardy Asters.
Boltonia.
Chrysanthemum, Alaska.
C. maxima semi-plena.
Coreopsis lanceolata.
Sweet Williams.
Gaillardia aristata.
Geranium nepalense.
Heliosia pitcheriana.
Hemerocallis aureolea.
Hemerocallis fulva.
Hemerocallis kwanso fl.-pl.
Hemerocallis ochroleuca.
Lythrum, Brightness.
Pentstemon digitalis.
Physostegia virginica alba.

Monarda, Cambrige
Scarlet.
Thalictrum adiantifolium.

Rockery Plants

Eryngium amethystinum.
Geranium nepalense.
Heuchera sanguinea alba.
Hosta lancifolia.
Hosta elatior.
Ranunculus acris fl.-pl.
Sedum ibericum.
Sedum Stahli.
Sempervivum Doellianum.
Sempervivum globiferum.
Tradescantia virginica.

Selections must
be confined to
this list

- To move.
- Prominent nursery.
- Garden for rearing young plants.
- Male parent.
- Plot of ground.
- Small child.
- A numeral.
- Fall flowers.
- Onion-shaped roots.
- Neuralgia.
- Name of a card.
- Gives warmth.
- Company (abbreviation).
- Seventh note of the scale.

Bertrand H. Farr—Wyomissing Nurseries Company
1250 Garfield Avenue, Wyomissing, Penna.